

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Ranger-Narrated Activities

Acadia National Park is issuing this REQUEST for PROPOSALS from any organization or business wishing to add Park Ranger-conducted nature programs about Acadia National Park to talks, walks, hikes, youth programs, bicycle tours, bus tours, or boat programs serving Mount Desert Island and Schoodic. A standard fee for park ranger-narrated activities will apply. Accepted proposals will be valid for up to 5 years and ranger-led services will be marketed to park visitors in park facilities, program publications and on the park website.

Mount Desert Island and Schoodic Peninsula, Maine

Proposals will be accepted until 4:30 P.M. (Eastern Standard Time)

**February 01, 2016**

Administrative Officer  
National Park Service  
Acadia National Park  
P.O. Box 177 (Eagle Lake Road)  
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

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## ABSTRACT

The National Park Service invites proposals to host ranger-narrated activities for the public in and around Acadia National Park. Organizations that would like to have a park ranger join their groups by having the ranger conduct a talk, walk, hike, co-host a youth camp, and/or join a guided bicycling or boating program are encouraged to submit a proposal. A standard fee for park ranger-narrated activities will apply.

The purpose of this request is to solicit proposals that would result in safe, quality interpretive experiences for park visitors that visit Acadia National Park as a group through an organization. All proposals that are consistent and compatible with the purpose and function of interpretation at Acadia National Park are welcome. Any organization meeting the requirements specified in this Request for Proposals may participate in the competitive process. The qualifications of proposers will be evaluated by a panel to assure that prospective operators have the experience, equipment, personnel and demonstrated intent to provide the proposed services.

Criteria by which proposals will be evaluated are set forth in this Request for Proposals, along with historical, interpretive, and logistical data on the activities and proposal submission requirements. All proposals received within the stated time period will be evaluated by the National Park Service and the proposals considered to best meet the criteria will be selected as the basis for negotiation and a final Memorandum of Agreement. The National Park Service may choose to reject all proposals received at any time and re-solicit or cancel the request in whole or part when it is in the best interest of the government.

The Request for Proposals will be open for forty-five (45) days, and proposals will be accepted until 4:30 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, **February 01, 2016**, at Acadia National Park Headquarters, P.O. Box 177 (Eagle Lake Road), Bar Harbor, Maine, 04609.

### **Directions to submit a Proposal for consideration:**

Please read this full "Request for Proposals."

Print the "PROPOSAL TO REQUEST PARK RANGER SERVICES" form available at <http://www.nps.gov/acad/getinvolved/dobusinesswithus.htm> )

Mail completed, signed form to:  
Administrative Officer  
National Park Service  
Acadia National Park  
P.O. Box 177 (Eagle Lake Road)  
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

**Questions?** Christie Anastasia, Deputy Chief of Interpretation, 207.288.8806

## I. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

By the late 1950s, the National Park Service (NPS) had incorporated boat cruises into its interpretive operations at Acadia National Park. In the early 1980s, the park budget could no longer support the number of interpretive staff needed to cover the full schedule of programs. Existing boat operators, already working under memoranda of understanding with the NPS, offered to subsidize the cost of ranger narration. Since that time, the operators of the cruises have paid to help support the interpretive program. For its part, the park provides an interpretive ranger and public notice of those tours to which the park interpreters are assigned. The notice lists the time, location, and name of the tours, but excludes the names of the boat services and schedules of any non-NPS narrated trips that may be offered. Acadia National Park seeks to continue these types of agreements and expand the operations into other types of ranger-narrated activities such as hikes, youth camps, non-motorized boating, bicycle tours, and possibly into other areas such as the Schoodic District of Acadia National Park.

The park interpretive program strives to offer a variety of experiences with a range of activities, topics, times and costs in order to appeal to a wide range of park visitors and create an adequate balance within the overall interpretive schedule. Therefore, it is the National Park Service's intent to promote fair and open competition between all available entities to provide service for ranger-narrated tours in conjunction with these activities.

## II. REQUIREMENTS OF RANGER-NARRATED ACTIVITIES

### A. For each of the following activities, the National Park Service will:

1. Provide a National Park Service ranger for up to seven days per week mid-May through mid-October, at mutually agreeable times. Final schedules will depend on training schedules, and visitation levels. Schedules for May, June, July, and August will be finalized prior to March 30 each year. Schedules for September and October will be finalized by July 15 each year. The park ranger's purpose is to interpret for audiences the scenic, natural, and historic values associated with Acadia and its surroundings in context with the relevancy of science and research that connect people to the park in conjunction with park interpretive themes (see page 8 for interpretive themes).
2. Provide public notice in the Acadia National Park program schedule and on the park website ([www.nps.gov/acad](http://www.nps.gov/acad)) of those activities to which National Park Service rangers are assigned. The notice will list the time, location, activity operator's reservation phone number, and name of event but will exclude other trips that the service offers that are not accompanied by an NPS park ranger.
3. Review and approve advertisement and marketing of National Park Service ranger-narrated activities by the activity operator prior to any advertisement and marketing made public.
4. **Set a rate of a National Park Ranger's cost at \$55 per hour including travel times to and from closest duty station.** Rangers will narrate programs according to Acadia National Park interpretive themes (see page 8 for interpretive themes).
5. Not be held liable for cancellation events outside of its control (such as a Government-wide "Shutdown" due to a national budget stoppage). In this type of event, communication channels will be active and frequent to seek a mutually agreeable decision as to how to proceed forward.
6. Actions of activity operator staff should reflect park stewardship and ethical values while activity is underway, i.e. not bringing audiences too close to wildlife, not littering, not collecting or disturbing resources in a manner to leave them impaired and no solicitation or suggestion of gratuity for any staff.

**B. For all ranger-narrated activities, the activity operator will:**

1. Adhere to program schedules posted in the Acadia National Park program schedule. It is understood that the activity operator has full authority to cancel an activity or return prematurely if fog, inclement weather, lightening or other events threaten passengers or property. In the event an activity operator chooses to cancel a program, the payment for the ranger-narration is still in effect and a refund is not available. In some cases a mutually agreeable resolution may be available (such as adding on a program later in the season when a park ranger is available).
2. Provide training activities each year at times mutually agreeable to the NPS and the activity operator, so National Park Service rangers assigned to the operator's activity can gain necessary knowledge to carry out their duties competently. Training should include aspects related to the program as well as familiarize rangers of elements related to safety. Training may accommodate paying passengers as well.
3. Provide guidance for permitting other park employees and volunteers on activities for training purposes when space is available.
3. Maintain and manage all equipment, reservations, payments, paperwork, and cancellation procedures for participants of all ranger-narrated programs.
4. Submit advertisement and marketing of National Park Service ranger-narrated activities to the National Park Service for review and approval prior to any advertisement and marketing made public.
5. In the event audio needs are required for a ranger-narrated program, provide high quality operational equipment for the ranger-narrated program (for example a microphone/sound system used on a boat cruise).
6. Permit on-duty supervisors, with advance notice, to attend activities free of charge, in order to audit and coach performance of National Park Service rangers at a minimum of two audits per park ranger per season.
7. Prohibit alcoholic beverages on any activity on which National Park Service ranger narration is provided.
8. Ensure that operator staff works cooperatively with audience members and National Park Service rangers.
9. Enable participants to access programs in a manner that minimizes congestion or conflicts with other visitors attempting to use parking areas in high visitor use areas. Options include shuttles and/or Island Explorer services.
10. Visitors entering the park under this arrangement must comply with park entrance fees as applicable.
11. Obtain appropriate permits for conducting business within Acadia National Park, where applicable, special use permit and/or commercial use authorization.
12. Provide staff to assist visitors with disabilities in conjunction with a ranger-narrated activity (for example on/off kayaks/canoes). As stated in the park's General Management Plan, every reasonable

effort will be made to make the facilities and services of the National Park Service accessible to all, including visitors with disabilities.

13. Agree to assume liability for and does hereby agree to save, hold harmless, protect, defend and indemnify the United States of America, its agents and employees from and against any and all liabilities, obligations, losses, damages or judgments (including without limitations penalties and fines), claims, actions, suits, costs, and expenses (including without limitation attorneys' fees and experts' fees) of any kind and nature whatsoever on account of fire or peril, bodily injury, death, or property damage, or claims for bodily injury, death, or property damage of any nature whatsoever, and by whomsoever made, in any way connected with or arising out of the activities of the Operator, its employees, agents, or contractors under this agreement. This indemnification shall survive the term or expiration of this agreement.

14. The Operator shall obtain and maintain during the entire term of this agreement at its sole cost and expense Comprehensive General Liability insurance against claims occasioned by the actions or omissions of the Operator, its agents, and employees in carrying out the activities and operations described herein. Such insurance shall be in a form satisfactory to the Superintendent and in an amount commensurate with the degree of risk and the scope and size of such activities authorized hereunder, but in any event not less than \$1,000,000 per person and \$3,000,000 per incident. All liability policies shall specify that the insurance company shall have no right of subrogation against the United States of America or shall name the United States of America as an additional named insured and in that event shall provide that the insurance company shall have no recourse against the Government for payment of any premium or assessment. A certificate of insurance indicating that the required insurance is in effect shall be provided by the operator to the Superintendent prior to the commencement of any activities described herein.

15. Provide payment on a timely basis as specifically articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement. Default of payment will result in cancellation of services for the remainder of the season.

16. Provide a non-refundable advance payment to enable the National Park Service to hire and train the NPS staff which will be providing the ranger-narrated tours. This initial payment will be equivalent to 20% of the total cost of running the program each season, with the exact costs and timeframes identified in the Memorandum of Agreement established with the National Park Service. The advance payment is a portion of the overall program costs, not an addition to the costs.

**C. In addition, specifically for motorized boat tours, the activity operator will:**

1. Provide a U.S. Coast Guard-inspected motorized passenger-carrying vessel operated by an appropriately licensed operator and crew and outfitted with a public address system that is clearly audible throughout the passenger seating area.

2. Provide a space for the National Park Service ranger to stand and face the majority of passengers directly with eye contact. A two-deck boat with a public address system audible on each deck is acceptable because the ranger can shift from one deck to the other. More than two decks do not work effectively for one ranger.

3. Follow the specified travel route (as proposed, agreed upon, and detailed in the Memorandum of Agreement to be written as a record of mutual commitments).

4. Permit the National Park Service ranger to tailor the specific route on a day-to-day basis, especially if an interpretive advantage can be gained, and provided that any decision she/he requests

does not violate boating laws or threaten passenger safety and is practical within the normal duration of the tour. Consult with the park ranger in order to plan the best interpretive route when fog may affect passengers' view.

5. Ensure that boat operation staff works cooperatively with passengers and National Park Service rangers.

6. Ensure that wildlife is viewed at a distance that does not harass or jeopardize the animals' well-being, and that Maine marine regulations are followed.

### III. CONTENT OF PROPOSALS

Proposals should be persuasive as to their feasibility and should reflect a realistic understanding of activity operations. The substance of the proposal, as approved by the National Park Service, will be incorporated in the Memorandum of Agreement that successful proposers will be required to execute. This agreement will contain specific performance requirements and will constitute the formal arrangements mutually agreed to by the operator and the National Park Service. It is anticipated that the memorandum of agreement will be in effect for a period of five years.

### IV. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PROPOSALS

The criteria below will be used to evaluate all proposals submitted in accordance with the requirements of this request. They are listed in descending order of importance. Each proposal will be scored on the extent to which:

1. The proposal ensures the opportunity for quality interpretation by park staff.
2. The proposal minimizes conflicts such as lack of visual contact with the narrator or the resource, congestion and crowding, extraneous noise, odors, weather, and other environmental factors that may affect ranger narrators and passenger/visitor enjoyment of Acadia National Park.
3. The proposer and other key members of the proposer's business have experience in managing quality programs for the public.
4. Price point for programs is at a fair market value in a manner to make programs reasonably priced.
5. The vessel and safety-related issues are evaluated through a review of documents furnished in the response to the proposal (where applicable).

### V. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSERS

#### **Directions to submit a Proposal for consideration:**

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Mail completed, signed form to:  
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National Park Service

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Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

**Questions?** Christie Anastasia, Deputy Chief of Interpretation, 207.288.8806

- Each proposer shall furnish all the information required by this request.
- The National Park Service assumes no responsibility for proposals submitted on the basis of an incomplete package.
- Proposers are expected to review all requirements and instructions of this request; failure to do so will be at the proposer's risk.
- One signed original proposal will be submitted to be considered.
- Proposals will not be returned but will be retained by the National Park Service for the official record.
- Proposals must be signed by an official authorized to bind the proposer and contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is firm for a period of not less than ninety (90) days.
- Proposals must be enclosed in sealed envelopes and submitted to reach the National Park Service office before the time stated on the cover sheet of this request.
- Modifications must be enclosed in sealed envelopes and submitted to reach the National Park Service office before the time stated on the cover sheet of this request.
- The proposal should be on plain bond paper, with the proposer's identification on the cover sheet only.
- The face of the envelope shall show the hour and date specified on the title page of this request and name and address of the proposer.
- Electronic proposals or modification will not be considered; however, proposals may be withdrawn by written or electronic notice, provided such notice is received prior to the date specified for receipt.

All proposals received within the stated time period will be evaluated by the National Park Service and the proposal(s) considered to meet the criteria best will be selected as basis for negotiation of a memorandum of agreement. After the deadline for receipt of proposals, no pre-award information concerning the status of the request will be furnished other than to those individuals or organizations contacted for negotiations, if any.

The National Park Service may choose at any time to reject all proposals received and re-solicit or cancel the request altogether when in the best interest of the Government. Selection of operators may be made on initial proposals received without discussion; therefore, each proposal should be submitted showing the most favorable terms.

## VI. PARK INTERPRETIVE THEMES

1. The lure of the scenic and diverse resources of the Acadia archipelago has resulted in thousands of years of human interactions with these landscapes-today providing opportunities to imagine and appreciate local lifestyles and values, to gain a sense of place in these rugged coastal habitats, and to choose our roles in Acadia's continuing story.
2. The combination of Acadia National Park's rich history of individual stewardship and extraordinary natural and cultural environments inspires people to learn about the critical issues threatening the park and take action to protect the integrity of Acadia in a changing world.



3. The unique location of the Acadian archipelago at the interface between ocean and land, temperate and boreal provides for diverse, dynamic ecosystems where people and nature are intricately linked by the need to coexist and to adapt to changing conditions.
4. The dramatic mountain and island topography of the Acadian archipelago displays evidence of the powerful geologic and hydrologic forces which shape it, provides a chance to understand the dynamic, on-going processes that affect our planet, and creates a foundation for the area's ecological diversity and human activity.